Death and Desire in Contemporary Japan
Representing, Practicing, Performing
edited by Andrea De Antoni and Massimo Raveri

A Dream to Challenge the 'World of Dreams'
Evanescence and Desire in *Ano ie* (1953) by Enchi Fumiko

Daniela Moro
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract This is an analysis of the short story *Ano ie* by Enchi Fumiko (1905-1986), based on the affinity with Noh, both in structure and content. In particular, the main plays quoted are *Dōjōji* and *Izutsu*, which both revolve around the notion of female desire at the centre of their narration. After surveying the readings of the texts by a few scholars, such as Wakita Haruko, Kanaseki Takeshi and Susan Blakeley Klein, the article will look at how the intertextual references to the two plays in *Ano ie* construct Enchi's singular interpretation of female desire, which is seen in its many stages through the life of the protagonist, Kayo. In conclusion, the dream-like structure of the narration becomes the only way to escape from obsessions and the evanescence of life, allowing the protagonist to be the spectator of her own past and sublimate her negative passions.

Keywords Dōjōji. Izutsu. Mugen Noh. Female Desire. Mujō. Cross-Gendered Performance. Dream.

1 Introduction

Ano ie, published in 1953 in the magazine *Bessatsu shōsetsu Shinchō* 別冊小説新潮 (Enchi [1953] 1977-78, 2), focuses on the love story between Kayo 香代, a traditional Japanese *nihon buyō* 日本舞踊 dancer, and a Noh actor, Nishikawa 西川, who, at the time of the narration, has already passed away. I will analyse some crucial points of this work, focusing on the intertextuality between classical theatre and prose that lies at the heart of this text.

2 Narrative Features

Kayo's mind is rendered explicit through the narrative voice and whenever a comment occurs, it is always rendered to us as her train of thought. For

Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies 6
DOI 10.14277/6969-151-5/CFJS-6-6 | Submission 2016-01-11 | Acceptance 2016-11-11
ISBN [ebook] 978-88-6969-151-5 | ISBN [print] 978-88-6969-150-8 |

example, two adjectives refer to the male protagonist Nishikawa: *kimagure* 気まぐれ (moody) and *wagamama* わがまま (egoist), but they are seen from Kayo's point of view, since the same sentence contains the expression *ataete kureru* 与えてくれる (he makes the favour of giving me), obviously used by the narrator in order to express closeness to Kayo's mind (Enchi [1953] 1977-78, 2: 69).[1] Even when the narration is close to the male protagonist Nishikawa, one cannot regard it as a shift in perspective, since there are expressions such as *rashiku* らしく that suggest a supposition (69). Thus, it does not directly report Nishikawa's thought. On the contrary, it is more probable that this too is part of Kayo's thought.

Two narrative levels give the work an inverted narrative structure. The first one is the framework, at the beginning and at the very end of the piece, which introduces the second narrative level, or the body of the story. The narrative voice shows the present situation and describes Kayo relaxing at a thermal resort after a performance. This framework is the spur for the flux of Kayo's memory, recalling the love story with Nishikawa, who passed away many years before. Indeed, the framework contains some brief flash-forwards that pre-empt the events recalled in the central story, narrated on the second level. Those flash-forwards are mainly triggered by the dreamlike encounter of Kayo with a woman at the resort hotel, who is supposed to be the niece of the owner of 'that house' (*ano ie* あの家), the teahouse with rooms for romantic encounters between lovers, which lends itself as title to the work. Then the body of the story is introduced and the recollection of the events starts. In the following, I will give a brief account of these events.

3 Plot

Kayo and Nishikawa were known to each other as disciple and teacher, since she asks him to teach her the Noh drama *Izutsu* 井筒, in order to apply it to her dance in the *nihon buyō* style of the same play. After the unsuccessful performance of *Izutsu* by Kayo, she accompanies him to a Noh costume exhibition and then he brings her to the teahouse, where their relationship starts. At first, Kayo is almost upset by the tactlessness of Nishikawa's approach, to the point that she wants to cry. Afterwards, however, she starts feeling at ease in his embrace. Not before long, Kayo's feelings and desires grow increasingly deep and she keeps the relationship hidden so as to avoid opposing voices, which could hinder their marriage. On the other hand, the feelings of the Noh actor Nishikawa start to wane. He starts going out with other women and Kayo becomes caught up in

1 Unless otherwise specified, all translations from Japanese are the Author's.

jealousy. When Nishikawa abandons Kayo, she is desperate and puts all her efforts into her art, which she had neglected during their relationship, to the point that the father was about to adopt a different disciple to follow in his art, according to the custom for families without children in the world of traditional performing arts. But after having overcome the pain of an unrequited love, her art takes on a more mature touch and gains strength. Kayo's father is happy about this, but ignores that the motivation at the basis of her strength is that she is not seeing Nishikawa anymore. After a while, she starts hearing many stories about love relationships in which Nishikawa would have toyed with women and eventually abandoned them. Then, Kayo sees Nishikawa for the last time after seven years, during the war. He is playing the *shite* シテ (main actor) of the play *Dōjōji* 道成寺 and Kayo is moved because the female desire conveyed by Nishikawa, playing on the stage the snake-woman role, reflects the same intense passion she once had felt for him. When the end of the war is approaching, Kayo, who had been evacuated to the mountains, reads in the newspaper that her former lover has passed away from pneumonia. After the main body of the story has finished, we return to the framework, set again at the thermal resort, in the morning after the supposed encounter with the woman of the teahouse.

It is important to notice that the encounter Kayo has with that woman remains in a dreamlike state, both at the beginning and at the end. From the way the encounter is described, it is difficult to understand whether we are faced with reality or just a fantasy of Kayo. Moreover, the non-parallelism between the sequence of the events and narration of those events, creates an ambiguity and incoherence,which is typical of the dream.

4 Affinity to the 'Dream Noh' Structure

In my opinion, it is precisely the pattern of the 'dream Noh' (*mugen nō* 夢幻能) that this work makes reference to. Describing the structure of this type of Noh, Beonio-Brocchieri (1967, 87) explains that the *shite* in the *nochiba* 後場 (second part of the performance) is "the character in its material individuality, which relives his/her own human events thanks to the technique of *flash back*, an enactment with the artifice of the dream by the waki".

In *Ano ie*, it is not the supporting character's role (*waki* 脇) to recall the past in Kayo's dreams, rather it is directly the main character's role (*shite*), which is Kayo herself. And the persona that disappears as a phantom is not Kayo, but the woman encountered at the resort, who is not named once during the entire narration. Indeed, she is a perfect minor character, who is useful as a spur for Kayo to recall her past. In this sense, she is comparable to the role of *waki*, although she ambiguously manifests herself like

a *shite* in a *mugen nō*. Also, Kayo has a principal role, even if at the same time she recalls the past thanks to a dream, like a *waki*.

In the first part of the performance (*maeba* 前場), the *waki* walks in the scene, followed by the *shite*, a phantom disguised as a human, telling the *waki* the story of the place (Cagnoni [1978] 2006, 108). Similarly, in *Ano ie*, through the dialogue with the woman-phantom, there is a flash-forward that becomes a sort of summary of the main story and pre-empts the main events.

During the second part of the *mugen nō*, there is a detailed narration of the events. The *nochijite*, the *shite* in the second part, dances in his/her original phantom appearance and the scene normally ends with the liberation of the *shite* from obsession and an image of *mujō* 無常 (caducity). Similarly, Kayo, at the end of the story after the war has finished, goes to the teahouse's ruins and intensely feels the caducity of everything, as we will see below. Through a vivid contrast between the memories of a vital and passionate past and the reality of death and destruction, the *shite*-Kayo experiences a sort of catharsis, thus finding purification from obsessive memories. She ultimately regains a new strength and joy of living.

Finally, at the end of a *mugen nō* there are a scene of awakening from an illusion and the revelation that it was a dream. In *Ano ie* the framework narration returns in order to conclude the story and the ending casts a shadow of doubt on the real existence of the woman. Thus, it makes the reader suspect that the whole story was recollect by Kayo in a dream.

Cagnoni speaks of 'critical mimesis' referring to the fact that *shite* and *waki*, along with their co-supporter (*tsure* ツレ) or with the chorus (*ji* 地), speak of themselves as third persons and therefore live their situation as spectators (Cagnoni [1978] 2006, 108-9). The narration of *Ano ie* can be interpreted in the same way, because the narrator is very likely to be an alter ego of Kayo, being perpetually inside her mind, but speaking in the third person.

5 *Dōjōji* and the Power of the Female Desire

The role of Noh in this work is not only linked to the structure, but it is even more essential when it comes to intertextuality. We know that the first step towards the end of Kayo's overwhelming passion for Nishikawa is when she goes to watch his performance of *Dōjōji*, seven years after the end of their relationship. On that occasion, Kayo experiences a sort of purification of her feelings. The narration (Enchi [1953] 1977-78, 2: 71) refers explicitly to a "distance from carnal desire" (*nikuyoku wo hanarete* 肉欲を離れて), because Kayo realises that at the end of the performance her feelings have changed and she desires to see him, not out of passion, but out of will to shake hands with him, probably in order to express her admiration for a fellow performer.

Dōjōji is a fourth type of drama, classified as a *genzai nō* 現在能, even if it is not characterized by a parallelism of sequence and narration of the events, as it is typical of this kind of Noh (Blakeley Klein 1991, 314).

The play is set in the Dōjō-ji Temple in the Province of Kii 紀伊. The background is the story of a lord's daughter, who has been told by her father that she will marry a certain mountain priest who visits her house every year. When she realises that this is not the priest's intention, she assumes that she has been betrayed by him. She transforms herself into a poisonous snake, chases the priest to the ground, and finally destroys him as he hides under the bell at Dōjō-ji Temple, by blowing flames of resentment onto the bell.

The play starts with a Buddhist rite for the hanging of a renewed bell. The head priest of the temple orders the other monks not to allow any women in for the rite. However, one *shirabyōshi* 白拍子 (a female dancer who wears a male costume) appears to ask the servant of the temple to allow her to perform a dance for the rite and manages to enter the place where the rite will be held. The woman approaches the hanging bell while dancing. She finally lowers the bell and hides in it. After hearing the news, the head priest of the Dōjō-ji Temple begins recounting the horrible story about the temple. The monks understand that the woman still has her heart set on the man and they pray with all their sacred power and successfully pull the hanging bell up. Then, the woman, transformed into a monstrous snake, appears from inside. After a furious battle, the poisonous snake burns herself with her own flames, which are supposed to burn the bell, and disappears into the bottom of the Hidaka River.

In the scene depicted in the work, there is the snake-woman fighting against the monk who wants to pacify her soul, in "obsessive attacks after escapes with no letting up". What is underlined in this scene is the weight of the female karma. The famous Noh critic Masuda Shōzō 増田正造 appreciates the description of the scene from *Dōjōji* to such an extent that he claims that Enchi was "a writer with no peers in the description of Noh scenes" (Masuda 1990, 387).

First of all, the choice of this precise Noh drama has to be pointed out, since, as underlined by Blakeley Klein (1991, 292), it is a story that came from *setsuwa* 説話 and underwent many dramatic changes before taking on the actual form. In the last *Dōjōji* version, the story took a particularly orthodox stance towards the idea of the female karma. Following the reconstruction of the variations of this story throughout the centuries, Blakeley traces back this increased criticism of the female figure to the change with time in performing needs. When the patrons of the Noh performances changed from monks to samurai, the tastes went towards more dynamic performances, which would possibly represent fights between *shite* and *waki* (322).

The principal motivation for the modification of the *Kanemaki* 鐘巻 play into the *Dōjōji* play is said to have been the desire to raise the dramatic

efficacy. For example, the scenic effect obtained by the *shite* as a snake-like figure diving into Hidaka's riverbed at the end of the play is obviously stronger than the scene in *Kanemaki*, where the woman is ultimately unburdened of worldly passions and exits the stage quietly. No matter what the motivations for this change were, I want to think here of how the reception of the drama has been influenced by this change.

Kanemaki derived from the story narrated in a *setsuwa* called Kegonenjienki 華厳演縁起, which "demonstrates that the power of feminine desire even in the monstrous form of a dragon can be transformed by the teaching of Buddhism into a power for good" (Blakeley Klein 1991, 302). It is evident that here the Buddhist principle of *gyakuen* 逆縁 is exalted. For this principle, "sin itself may paradoxically form the ladder, or 'link', to salvation" (307). This concept in *Kanemaki* is not as explicit as in the *setsuwa*, but the final scene of the enlightenment of the snake-woman shows that she understood her mistakes and, precisely because of that, she has the chance to overcome her passions in a catharsis-like process. For example, in *Kanemaki* the woman dressed as a *shirabyōshi* dancer is torn between the will to be purified from the obsession of an unrequited love and the will to find the monk to punish him for having disappointed her. On the other hand, in *Dōjōji*, the possible change of the woman's consciousness, the ambivalence is almost completely eliminated (Masuda 1971, 125-6). It is true that the interpretation of the serpent-woman's mind depends on the Noh school that performs it (Blakeley Klein 1991, 294-5), but generally in *Dōjōji* she corresponds to the image of the 'dangerous woman' archetype, without any repentance or will to reach enlightenment. Here, I borrowed the expression 'dangerous woman' from Nina Cornyetz (1999), referring to the modern and contemporary transformation of the *femme fatale*-like archetype belonging to Japanese tradition, born out of men's fear of women's independence and power of self-expression. In her book she dedicates a chapter to Enchi Fumiko's works, especially focusing on the concept of female karma, which is original of medieval Buddhism and skilfully adapted by Enchi.

In other words, the emphasis on female sexuality and desire in *Dōjōji* is evident. In *Kanemaki* it is the wisdom of the woman that allows her to enter the confines of the temple, forbidden on that day to women, but in *Dōjōji* it is thanks to her *shirabyōshi* dance, which represents the tool of female fascination and temptation. Moreover, the version of the story in *Dōjōji*, where the prayers of the monks fail to pacify the snake-woman, ends with the possibility that the snake could return from the river over and over again, since it is not enlightened or purified at all.

There are many Noh plays that trace female suffering for unrequited love or yearning, but *Dōjōji*, especially compared to its original, the *Kanemaki* version, could be considered as an emblematic play for describing a strong female desire and a marked female sensuality. The fact that in *Ano ie* the only scene quoted is precisely the climax of *Dōjōji* obviously

comes from the will to stress to the maximum degree the strength of female desire expressed by Nishikawa's performance of *Dōjōji* to which Kayo is a spectator:

> In that symbolic world Kayo started seeing her own figure in pain despairing and crying, when she had been abandoned seven years before, and for a moment she held her breath. She had lost. From the bottom of her heart she felt that she had lost. From the start she had perpetually been defeated by Nishikawa, but after watching the performance today, she felt that she was living inside Nishikawa's art. She touched her cheek and realized that a pure tear was flowing down. (Enchi [1953] 1977-78, 71)

Kayo sees herself under a new light and, for the first time after seven years, she deeply realises how much she had been suffering. Only one tear flows down her face, which is probably a sign of purification.

It is not uncommon for Enchi to use the intertextual references to Noh drama to render the depth of the protagonists' feelings. In this case, the technique is even more powerful because the actor who brings the role of the desiring female to the stage is the man for whom the woman protagonist of the work suffers. Conversely, the roles danced by Kayo are the womanizer male roles, such as the protagonists of *Izutsu* 井筒 and *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* 好色一代男.

6 *Kōshoku ichidai otoko*, the Repented Womanizer

First I will focus on the intertextual reference to *Kōshoku ichidai otoko*, the famous Edo period book on the adventures of Yonosuke 世之介, by Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴. The chapter of Saikaku's work that inspired Kayo's performance is narrated in detail at the beginning of the work, where Kayo is reconsidering her performance while resting at the thermal resort. This metadiegesis is useful here because the reader can understand the tone of the performance, which is not in harmony with the general lively tone of the original *Kōshoku ichidai otoko*. The chapter is indeed extremely sombre and full of references to the evanescence of life. The theme of passion is opposed to that of *mujō* and therefore it is in line with the rest of the narration. In this chapter Yonosuke, the stereotype of Don Juan, gets out of prison where he had been retained for having an illicit relationship with a married woman. He meets another married woman in the prison, and they try to escape together, but the woman is caught by her husband and killed. The chapter ends with the unusual image of a desperate Yonosuke, who attempts to commit suicide because he is feeling guilty for the death of the woman. The contrast between this scene and the usual hedonistic

tones of Saikaku's work powerfully suggests the ineffability of death and the evanescence of worldly passions. Even the man who has dedicated his entire life to the pleasures of the fleeting world has to face his karma at a certain point in time and is obliged to endure a sense of disillusionment and the victory of death over everything.

The narrative text of *Ano ie* indicates that the performance based on this chapter is greatly appreciated by the audience, especially concerning Kayo's disciple's interpretation of the woman's passion, choosing to escape with her lover Yonosuke. But Kayo is not satisfied with her performance of Yonosuke. She admits

> she would have liked to dig a dark cave with a big entrance into the heart of such men, through the figure of a Don Juan like Yonosuke, who is changing continuously without peace, consuming his passions from a woman to the other in one instant. (Enchi [1953] 1977-78, 63-4)

7 Cross-gendered Performance

The cross-gendered scheme emphasises Nishikawa's talent versus the mediocrity of Kayo's performance, especially when it comes to performing roles of the opposite sex.

Moreover, many years before this performance of Yonosuke, Kayo is scolded by Nishikawa for her performance of *Izutsu*. He argues that the scene where the female main character "becomes a man" (*otoko ni natta tokoro* 男になったところ) is not well performed (67). This underlines the disparity between their artistic skills, which metaphorically mirrors what will become of their emotional status after their relationship starts. The cross-gendered performance – which is actually a metatextual performance in *Izutsu* – has the opposite effect of the cross-gendered performance in *Dōjōji*. Kayo, focused on her passion in love, has no energies left to dedicate to her art as she was used to. She *is* herself the longing woman, the waiting woman, thus she cannot avoid identification with this role once on stage.

On the other hand, Nishikawa, whose feelings are more distant and indifferent because he is not concentrating on her, being free from attachment, can seamlessly enter the soul of women and "bleed them dry", as some disciple of Kayo says (71). Not only, but also thanks to his coldness, he can calmly observe from the outside the destructive passion she feels for him, finding inspiration in it for his women roles, which become even more efficacious after the relationship with Kayo. This is based on the idea that the woman's destiny is retribution since her attachment to worldly passions and carnal desire are deep, precisely like the female figure in *Dōjōji*. Generally speaking, in Buddhist terms, every attachment

is negative, but Enchi in her first works does not deny female karma. The narrator of *Ano ie*, entering Kayo's mind, argues: "the more Nishikawa's cold heart was exposed, the more Kayo's passionate desire would become single-mindedly strong" (Enchi [1953] 1977-78, 69). In this phase of Enchi's works, the woman is the victim of man's coldness. Therefore, the Buddhist idea of female karma is not denied, but rather emphasised in order to denounce the genders' inequality. The narration underlines: "in art there should be neither male nor female, but Kayo thought that probably female are less suitable for it" (64). An admission that woman's loss is both moral and artistic, hence social as well.

Cagnoni, explaining Zeami's theories, argues that the actor and the character are separate, sometimes even contrasting personas. She insists on the need for the actor to be critical in his mimesis, to 'narrate' the character, ideally reaching the alienation effect given by the distance from the character represented (Cagnoni [1978] 2006, 111).

Kayo's dance is not a Noh dance, even though we know that it borrows many elements from Noh. Nevertheless, it is clear from the text that, if Kayo had been able to distance herself from her passion, she could have given her performance a different degree of energy and effectiveness. When Kayo is focused on her relationship with Nishikawa, her dance loses energy. The other way round, once she is abandoned by him, she finds comfort putting all her energy and time into dancing and, as stated previously, her performance improves dramatically.

There is a very significant sentence in the narration that evidently expresses Kayo's thought on the art of Noh. It reads: "what can it be this refined and intense beauty which does not seem to be of this world and is emanated from the action of a man on the stage allowing to perceive the void?" (Enchi [1953] 1977-78, 67).

This definition seems very close to that of *yūgen* 幽玄, pointing out the obscure and mysterious grace that emanates from a Noh scene, as underlined by Cagnoni's reference to the commentary by the famous critic Nose Asaji 能勢朝次 (1894-1955) in the collection of treatises Zeami Jūrokubushū 世阿弥十六部集 (Collection of Sixteen Treatises by Zeami) (Cagnoni [1967] 2006, 72-3). The perception of the void and self-awareness of the spectator is the ideal aim of theatrical expressions such as Noh, where there is no perfect identification of the actor with the character. When there is identification of the actor with his/her role, there is indeed no space for interpretation by spectators. But the abstract art of Noh allows a personal reading, therefore a consequent projection of the spectator's emotions onto the stage. This leads to their objectification and ultimate awareness of his or her passions. The fact that the actor takes distance from passions before interpreting a role is therefore essential to achieving a successful result performance (Cagnoni [1978] 2006, 109-11).

8 *Izutsu* and the "Woman Waiting for the Past"

Here I would like to concentrate on the *Izutsu* play, because some concepts linked to this play are crucial to the interpretation of *Ano ie*, even more than *Dōjōji*, which is referred to more often in the narration.

I already mentioned that because of *Izutsu*, Kayo and Nishikawa meet each other at first. She asks him to teach her to perform this play in order to use it in her *nihon buyō* dance style. The play, taken from *Ise monogatari* (伊勢物語), narrates the story of Ki no Aritsune's (紀有常) daughter, married to Ariwara no Narihira (在原業平), another Don Juan of Japanese classical literature. It is a *mugen nō* and a 'wig play' (*katsuramono* 鬘物), a play where a woman features as the protagonist.

As a typical *mugen nō*, *Izutsu* starts with an itinerant Buddhist monk in the role of *waki* who stops at a temple, the Ariwara-dera (在原寺) in Yamato on his way to the Hase Temple (長谷寺). According to the legend, the Ariwara Temple was built by Ariwara no Narihira. A village woman in the role of *shite* arrives to tend a grave in the garden. She draws offertory water from a wooden-framed well and, as the priest watches her, he becomes intrigued. In response to the monk's inquiries, she begins to tell the story "Tsutsu-Izutsu" from the *Ise Monogatari*, a love story between Ariwara no Narihira and a daughter of Ki no Aritsune. Young Narihira and Aritsune's daughter, who compared their heights at the well head, grew to adulthood and got married after exchanging love poems. The woman reveals to the monk that she is Ki no Aritsune's daughter, then she disappears behind the old burial mound.

The priest asks a village man about the place and hears the story more plainly. The villager suggests that, as a priest, he could offer a prayer to her soul, and so he decides to settle down for the night on a bed of moss in the garden. Late at night, the ghost of Lady Izutsu appears in his dream while the monk is asleep. This is the typical formula of the second part in a *mugen nō*. The woman in his dream wears Narihira's headdress and a male's imperial court kimono and starts the dance of *jonomai* 序の舞 showing her love and yearning for him. The phantom of the woman in that moment takes Narihira's place, with the intention of becoming one with her object of desire. She looks into the well that they had stood beside as children, seeing his reflection instead of her own. She then cries and disappears. At that point the monk is awakened from the dream.

Like in the majority of Noh plays and in this drama too, the sense of caducity is strong, and both *waki* and *shite* insist on underlining the transience of life on numerous opportunities. In the first part, the woman says (Yasuda 1980, 411):

定めな き世の夢心
sadamenaki yo no yumegokoro

何の音にか覺めてまし
Nan no oto ni ka sadametemashi
何の音にか覺めてまし
Nan no oto ni ka sadametemashi

In the translation by Kenneth K. Yasuda it reads as:

> In this fleeting world of men that our hearts dream of,
> what will be the sound that calls to awaken us,
> what will be the sound that calls to awaken us?

Yasuda interprets these lines as a call for Buddha's benevolence that would lead men to reach the Western Paradise or nirvana from the actual world, the 'world of dreams' from which men need to be awakened. Yasuda goes even further: he sees the end of the play when the monk awakens from the dream, as the breaking of the dream of actual reality.

In other readings, the invocation of Buddha is lost or merely used as a way to emphasise, conversely, the loss of hope for salvation from this world of dreams. The form is therefore religious, but the content is not necessarily interpreted in religious terms: this word is transient and therefore it is like a dream. Wakita Haruko (脇田晴子) points out that this is the only passage where one can detect Buddhist tones in the whole play (2005, 57). She argues that

> traditionally, in the readings of earlier scholars, this term '*sadametemashi*' used to be interpreted as reaching illumination. Actually the fact of aiming at the Western Mountain and if we consider the passage "voice of the Law, please guide me" (*michibiki tamae nori no koe* 導き給へ法の声) in the *sageuta* 下歌, it becomes obvious. Nevertheless, considering the same phrase, I cannot help thinking of the scenario where the phantom, asleep on the ground is awakened by a sound and suddenly emerges. I at least think that Zeami had both ways in mind. (57)

Also Kanaseki Takeshi (金関猛), studying the psychological aspects of Noh plays, underlines that this is the only phrase with Buddhist tones in the play; then, he questions whether the woman's call is made out of a real desire to reach illumination. He interprets it as a self-questioning attitude, most probably linked to a sentiment of resignation, which dissolves within herself (1999, 46). In Kanaseki's opinion the answer to this question could be at the very end of the play, exactly where Yasuda sees, as quoted above, some hope for human beings to attain nirvana. On the contrary, for Kanaseki the awaking of the monk by the sound of the temple bell is an awaking in this world of dream, a fleeting world, so it is not positive and confirms the woman's doubt about the chance to reach illumination. He

argues that this ending makes the spectator imagine that "other dreams will be weaved" (*yume wa sara ni tsumugare* 夢はさらに紡がれ) and that the woman's morning visit will continue every day (Kanaseki 1999, 46).

The dream is at the centre of this play, both in the structure of *mugen nō* where the monk dreams the story, and in the fact that the caducity of the actual life is emphasised by means of the metaphor of dream. Moreover, following Kanaseki's logic, the use of the monk's dream in the *nochiba* is a way to break with the actual world's evanescence, because this is the only way to make the past alive again. We can say that, ultimately, in *Izutsu* passion is so strong that it overcomes death: so, the woman's desire to meet her husband again in the afterlife is satisfied thanks to the dream, which overcomes the vanity of life (Kanaseki 1999, 43). Paradoxically, a dream represents the challenge to the world of dreams.

Notwithstanding this, Kanaseki underlines that it is not the phantom of the woman who wants to appear in the monk's dream, but it is the monk calling the past figure of Narihira before taking to rest (1999, 48). Further evidence is given that it is not the woman calling for divine help; therefore the sentence quoted above, calling for Buddha's mercy, is more to stress the perception of *mujō* than to ask for prayers.

On the other hand, he affirms that the memory of the past is always true along with memory of facts, whether real or invented, since both are 'psychological realities'. Therefore, they can affect the life of the person who is remembering at the same level (Kanaseki 1999, 50). Moreover, since in *Izutsu* past events are not recalled in chronological order – since first life as husband and wife is narrated and then the child memories come up – every principle of reality loses strength (Kanaseki 1999, 48-9) and the narration goes in the direction of the past. This is why the female protagonist of *Izutsu* is paradoxically defined as (64) a "woman who waits for the distant past" (*harukana inishie wo machitsudukeru 'hitomatsu onna'* 遥かないにしえを待ち続ける「人待つ女). Her phantom's longing and desire for her dead husband is so strong that she continues to linger in this world, but the only way to meet him again is to encounter him in the past, by making him live again in her body in the cross-gendered transformation of the monk's dream, where she is herself and the dead husband at the same time. It is like a dance between man and woman, or a metaphorical sexual encounter (Kanaseki 1999, 63-4), which is aimed at the satisfaction of the woman's desire, projected from the past into the future.

There is another aspect related to the concept of desire prevailing after death. As narrated by the woman at the beginning of the play, she had been betrayed by her husband with a woman living far away. While she was waiting for his return, the wife, anxious for him to come home safely, showed her love and cherishing feelings towards him instead of being jealous. The story tells that the man, feeling this affection, stopped seeing the other woman because he understood the depth of his wife's love.

Strong longing and desire are ultimately the reasons why the woman is neither jealous nor she demonstrates any feelings of anger. This is the exact contrary to the protagonist of *Dōjōji*. Kanaseki argues that the sense of loss given by the death of her husband cancels all negative feelings, which must have been inevitably strong at the time of his fling. He quotes the seminal work on demons by Baba Akiko (1988, 56) and argues that, under the calm appearance of the *ko-omote* 小面 mask worn by the woman in *Izutsu*, there must hide a *hannya* 般若, an angry demon, the mask used in the *nochiba* of *Dōjōji*.

The study of *Izutsu* by Wakita (2005, 58-60) arrives at conclusions similar to those argued by Kanaseki. However, these are based on theatrical and not psychological analysis. At the centre of Zeami's *mugen nō* plays there often is a purposeful memorial service (*kuyō* 供養), which is employed when an angry spirit needs to be pacified in order to be able to take distance from obsessions and leave this world. She points out that, although this play is structured exactly in the same way, the ultimate aim of *Izutsu* is not the memorial service, but rather the spirit appears simply to "reenact the glory and the memory of the past" (*kako no eikō ya tsuioku wo saigen suru* 過去の栄光や追憶を再現する) (2005, 60). Wakita explains that the spirit protagonist of the play does not request a memorial service, since the only religious reference is the one we already quoted. Nevertheless, in her opinion, it can be interpreted in different ways, as we saw above. Wakita compares *Izutsu* to *Matsukaze* (松風), a play that expresses longing and desire after death but reenacts the past glories as well. She argues that in *Matsukaze* the spirits appear in order to receive prayers from the monk and reenact the past at the same time. Therefore, in this aspect of not necessarily requesting a *kuyō* for the lingering spirit, *Izutsu* is a singular play.

In some cases, as noted by Blakeley Klein (1991, 295), in *Dōjōji* the initial scene of the *shirabyōshi* is interpreted as a will to get rid of passions. Nevertheless, in her analysis of the play (2013, 37), Kimura Keiko (木村恵子) points out that the snake-woman, even if supposed to, does not show explicit will to reach salvation because of her fierce anger. Notwithstanding this, at the end there is an unsuccessful prayer because the serpent-woman escapes into Hidaka River. The female desire, embodied by the serpent-woman, is so strong that ultimately the Buddhist faith is ineffective.

The two main plays quoted in *Ano ie* have this point in common, and, in my opinion, this is very meaningful, since their final aim is not a religious one, but it is the pure emphasis on desire. A desire which is destructive in *Dōjōji* and nostalgic in *Izutsu*, but still strong and powerful. On the basis of this, the opposition of the two female figures at the centre of the two plays is intriguing: on the one hand a woman, transformed into a demon out of rage because she was refused by her beloved one; on the other hand, a woman who is intensely longing for her dead husband but does not show it emphatically. It is like two faces of the same coin, indeed the

two female figures can be interpreted as the two phases of Kayo's desire for Nishikawa, one while they are together but she is suffering because of his negligence, the other after his death. It is meaningful, too, that Kayo is unable to skilfully perform the woman in *Izutsu*, while Nishikawa has mastered *Dōjōji*'s female role, as noted above.

Distance from passions is what Kayo cannot reach, and this is underlined, not only in occasion of *Izutsu*'s performance when Kayo is young and still inexperienced regarding relationships with men, but also towards the end of the story, which is narrated at the beginning of the work, when she performs the dance inspired by *Kōshoku ichidai otoko*. The fact itself that Kayo performs the role of a man so as to understand men, as argued before, is a symptom of the fact that her art is still affected by her private life. Thus, her efforts are doomed to fail.

9 Death, Desire and Enchi's Use of the Cliché of *Mujō*

The concept of the evanescence of life, which belies the whole story, is a cliché of classical Japanese literature and drama. We find it especially in the intertextuality of *Izutsu* and *Kōshoku ichidai otoko*, but also for example in the very famous quotation at the beginning of the work from the *Hōjōki* 方丈記 by Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明, which gives a strong sense of vanity to the whole narration and therefore seems to suggest a key for interpretation from the very beginning. The quotation reads:

> The master and the dwelling are competing in their transience. Both will perish from this world like the morning glory that blooms in the morning dew. In some cases, the dew may evaporate first, while the flower remains – but only to be withered by the morning sun.[2]

The choice of this precise passage to set the general tone of the work is very indicative. The sense of evanescence is indeed found in the metaphor of the dwelling, the house, which recalls the title of Enchi's work, *Ano ie*. In my reading, the centrality of the house reaches its climax in the scene where Kayo, after the war and Nishikawa's death, comes back to Kagurazaka, where the teahouse was located. Without really intending to do so, she ends up stopping by and visiting the ruins. The narration says:

> I believe that every burnt-out area looks the same. Except for Kayo, who bore in her heart the unspeakable burden of Nishikawa's death, and the

2 The English translation of *Hōjōki* is taken from didactic materials from the website of Washburn University, URL `http://www.washburn.edu/reference/bridge24/Hojoki.html`.

> fact that Kagurazaka, where she and Nishikawa had met and separated, had been turned into a degenerated ruin, was such a horrific scene that she wanted to cover her eyes. (Enchi [1953] 1977-78, 72)

Exactly such as in the sentence by Kamo no Chōmei, human beings and their dwellings are evanescent, and in this case they are both gone forever. What remains is only the memory in Kayo's heart. She asks herself in a trance-like state:

> What on earth did I come here in search of, in the middle of these runs? The phantom of Nishikawa or the phantom of myself who loved Nishikawa? Mutual exchanges of hugs and contrasts, two bodies molded into one; now that wonderful music, the memory of those moments, survives only in herself. Both Nishikawa, with whom she had shared happiness and sadness, and the room where they had consumed their lives, would never return to this world again. (73)

The memories linked to that house, a place of life and passion, which had been defined before in the narration (69) as a 'beautiful dream' (*utsukushii yume* 美しいゆめ), are alternated in this climactic scene with the actual reality of the house, a place of death and destruction. Images of the desolated gardens or the holes on the pavement contrast with the lively past, like the smell of the fruits on show in a shop, or the voices of the children in the school nearby.

Corresponding to what we said about *Izutsu*, this passage in the end emphasises the desire thanks to the contrast with images of evanescence. Death and desire become even more inextricably linked in the sentence: "Kayo standing in the middle of those ruins in a swirl of dense yellow dust, felt that she was loving her own remaining life to the point of willing to caress it" (73). To continue with Kamo no Chōmei's metaphor, the remaining hours of the flower after the dew has vanished become very important: the desire for life is enhanced by death. But for the older Kayo, after all the negative experiences she has had, her desire for life is not linked to the desire for love like in *Izutsu*, where the passion towards the lost husband is emphasised by his death (Kanaseki 1999, 68). In *Ano ie* the one aroused by the consciousness of evanescence is a desire for a peaceful life, after having taken distance from worldly passions. Kayo's awareness of the need to distance herself from negative passions begins here, by the ruins of the house where she used to meet with Nishikawa. This sensation of "loving her own remained life" can be read as a will not to waist the remaining life with negative feelings and to live her life intensely without obstacles. In this laic adaptation of Buddhist principles by Enchi, the ultimate goal is not to get rid of every attachment to worldly passions, but to only keep the ones that allow us to enjoy life fully, without obsessions.

10 Conclusions

In her love story with Nishikawa, Kayo, such as the protagonist of *Dōjōji,* had to overcome both destructive desire and – after the death of Nishikawa, similar to the protagonist of *Izutsu* – a nostalgic and ardent desire based on the memory of the good days with him. But these experiences probably still were not enough to get rid of the obsession, since we know from the narration that the drive for the performance of *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* is in her strong will of understanding men like Nishikawa. And this intent becomes the last obstacle to the achievement of a good performance.

In my reading the only way to get rid of all those attachments is the dream. In the final dream where she meets the girl of the teahouse introduced at the beginning of the narrative framework, Kayo becomes a spectator to her own past, together with the reader. This dream, which embodies the whole narration of the story with Nishikawa, represents the final stage of Kayo's awareness. With this dream she experiences once again all the stages of her love from the outside and, thus, she can sublimate her own feelings. In particular, it is important that she re-experiences the stages of her own self-awareness: in a first step, as a spectator of *Dōjōji*, and in a second phase, by the ruins of the house. After recalling all those moments, she can finally purify and sublimate her desire. Ultimately, in *Ano ie* – like in *Izutsu,* albeit for different reasons – the only way to overcome the vanity of life is, paradoxically, dream.

At the very end of the story, Kayo asks the front desk of the hotel about the woman she met the evening before and it is in that moment that she realises that it was most likely a dream. After this *mugen n*ō-like scene, we can assume that Kayo gains awareness and comes back to her art with less attachments, being finally able to perform in an successful way, without having any obsessions at the base of her performance.

The narration of *Ano ie*, with its complex time structure, becomes a sort of Chinese box of the dream, where the end is merely suggested and remains open.

Bibliography

Baba Akiko (1988). *Oni no kenkyū* (Research on Demons). Tōkyō: Chikuma Shobō.

Beonio-Brocchieri, Paolo (1967). "Contenuto e Struttura nell'analisi del teatro Nō". *Il Giappone*, 7, 51-88.

Blakeley Klein, Susan (1991). "When the Moon Strikes the Bell. Desire and Enlightenment in the Noh Play Dōjōji". *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 17(2), 291-322.

Cagnoni, Paola [1967] (2006). "Introduzione alla trattatistica di Zeami". Ruperti 2006, 61-76.

Cagnoni, Paola [1978] (2006). "Proposta di analisi strutturale del teatro nō". Ruperti 2006, 77-114.

Cornyetz, Nina (1999). *Dangerous Women, Deadly Words. Phallic Fantasy and Modernity in Three Japanese Writer*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Enchi Fumiko [1953] (1977-78). "Ano ie" (That House). *Enchi Fumiko zenshū* (Enchi Fumiko Collection). Tōkyō: Shinchōsha, 2: 63-73.

Kanaseki Takeshi (1999). *Nō no seishinbunseki* (Psychological Analysis of Noh). Tōkyō: Heibonsha.

Kimura, Keiko (2013). "Returning Back to the Great Bell. *Dojoji* in Noh Theater". *Gakushūin Joshi Daigaku Kiyō*, 15, 31-43.

Lawson, Robert N. (transl.) (2001). *Kamo no Chōmei – Hōjōki* [online]. URL `http://www.washburn.edu/reference/bridge24/Hojoki.html` (2016-01-11).

Masuda Shōzō (1971). *Nō no hyōgen – Sono gyakusetsu no bigaku* (The Expression in Noh. A Paradoxical Aesthetics). Tōkyō: Chūo Kōronsha.

Masuda Shōzō (1990). *Nō to kindai bungaku* (Noh and Modern Literature). Tōkyō: Heibonsha.

Ruperti, Bonaventura (a cura di) [1967] (2006). *Paola Cagnoni. Scritti teatrali*. Venezia: Cafoscarina.

Wakita, Haruko (2005). *Nōgaku no naka no onnatachi – Onnamai no fūshi* (Women in Noh. The Style of Women's Dances). Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten.

Yasuda, Kenneth K. (1980). "A Prototypical Nō Wig Play". *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 40(2), 399-464.